

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JAMES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birch-in-Rusholme, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105508

Headteacher: Mrs B Kinch

Lead inspector: Mr M H Cole

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th July 2004

Inspection number: 257688

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	221
School address:	Cromwell Range Birch-in-Rusholme Manchester
Postcode:	M14 6HW
Telephone number:	0161 2246173
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend W Raines
Date of previous inspection:	8 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This junior and infant school is of average size, with 183 boys and girls aged between four and eleven who are of compulsory school age. In addition, a further 28 children aged three or four attend the full-time nursery class.

The school serves an urban area with a very culturally and socially mixed population. About three quarters of pupils are of minority ethnic origin and their family origins are in 35 different countries. Many of these pupils have learned, or are learning, English as an additional language. Just over a quarter of pupils have at some time received additional support from specialist staff within the school because they have been at an early stage of acquiring English.

Pupils' attainment on starting at the school, though varied, is average overall. The social and economic circumstances of parents also vary widely but, overall, are average.

By national standards, the school has a below-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. About seven per cent of pupils are identified as having such needs, mostly in relation to difficulties in learning. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, a typical number for a school of this size.

The school received a national School Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3369	Mr M H Cole	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Personal, social and health education
11418	Ms D Urwin	Lay inspector	
16038	Mrs J Bavin	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage ¹ Science Special educational needs
34175	Ms S El-Hassani	Team inspector	English as an additional language
25577	Mr W Jefferson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education

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¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school. Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well and to leave the school with high standards in English and mathematics. A very good ethos of attitudes and relationships, and a thorough commitment to equal opportunities, help pupils of all backgrounds to thrive both academically and personally. The good leadership of the headteacher is a key factor in all these achievements. The school represents good value for money.

The school's main strengths are:

- the oldest pupils' well-above-average results in the national tests of English and mathematics over recent years;
- very good teaching in Years 3 – 6 that leads to pupils' very good achievement;
- the headteacher's good leadership of her staff in a shared commitment to firmly held aims and values;
- full inclusion of pupils of all cultural and religious backgrounds in suitable opportunities to succeed in all aspects of their education;
- very successful promotion of responsible attitudes, very good behaviour and excellent relationships;
- the very good achievement of pupils for whom English is an additional language;
- good provisions of care and personal guidance for pupils, and especially for their welfare.

The school has achieved a good level of improvement since the previous inspection in 1998. Where there were weaknesses previously, matters are now satisfactory. Teaching has improved, especially in Years 3 – 6, leading to better achievement and to significantly raised standards in English and mathematics. Provisions for pupils' moral, social and cultural development are better and pupils' attitudes, previously judged 'good', are now very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve well overall. They start at the school with average attainment but they leave it with standards which are above those expected for their age and better than those found in similar schools. In Years 3 – 6, pupils achieve very well and reach well-above-average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science are average. This is shown by the 2003 test results. The mathematics results in the 2003 test (A*) put the school in the top five per cent nationally.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	A	A	A
mathematics	C	A	A*	A*
science	E	D	C	B

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Inspectors' examination of present Year 6 pupils' work and the provisional results of the 2004 national tests also supports this picture of standards in these subjects. In other subjects where inspectors are able to make judgements, good standards are found in physical education and

satisfactory ones in information and communication technology (ICT). Achievement of younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall and the standards of their work in writing, mathematics, science, ICT and physical education are as expected for their age. Overall reading standards in Year 2 are below what is expected for pupils' ages mainly because some more able pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable. The 2004 national tests for these pupils support these findings and also show that results in writing and mathematics are considerably better than in 2003. Pupils at the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes) achieve satisfactorily, most children achieving most of the learning goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

Pupils' very good standards of attitudes and behaviour, and their excellent relationships, reflect the school's **very good** provisions for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Standards of attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided is **good**. This includes teaching and learning of **good** overall quality. In Years 3 – 6, teaching is very good. It is consistently challenging and inspires the pupils to do their best. In Years 1 and 2, overall satisfactory teaching includes many good lessons but some more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their work. With this exception, teaching caters well for pupils of all abilities and needs. There are some good lessons in the Foundation Stage, too, but these are balanced by some instances of unsatisfactory practice in the nursery class, making the overall quality satisfactory. A strength of the teaching across the school is the very effective way teachers manage and encourage pupils so that they behave very well, take a lively interest and try hard. On the other hand, there is some irregularity in setting homework. Good features of an overall satisfactory curriculum are the curriculum for mathematics, the programme of personal, social and health education, and the enrichment of the curriculum by activities outside lessons. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. However, the very small computer suite, and equipment that is mostly aged and limited, hinder teaching in ICT and pupils' application of their skills across the curriculum. Staff provide good care, guidance and support for pupils' welfare and involve pupils well in discussing, and taking shared responsibility for the life of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall with the good leadership of the headteacher its most positive and effective feature. She has a clear vision and leads her staff successfully in a determined commitment to meeting the needs of a very diverse pupil population and establishing an ethos of mutual respect and endeavour. The headteacher gives good support to the development of the teaching and curriculum. Other key staff provide sound leadership in their areas of responsibility. Governors meet their responsibilities satisfactorily. Management of the school is satisfactory overall and there is strength in financial management. Senior staff and governors make satisfactory checks on the work of the school, but procedures for this are not as sharp as necessary to make a good school still better by identifying and resolving inconsistencies and examples of less successful practice.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents are happy with the school. A small but significant minority have reservations about homework and the quality of communications between school and parents. Inspectors agree these should be improved. Pupils think very highly of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no major weaknesses but to become still better the most important steps are to:

- increase the rigour of key staff's and governors' procedures for checking the effectiveness of the school's work;
- improve the quality of teaching in the nursery class;
- improve the accommodation and resources for ICT ;
- make more systematic and consistent arrangements for the most and least able pupils, including those with special educational needs.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **good**. The overall standards of pupils as they leave the school are **above the level expected** for their age. In English and mathematics, standards are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 6 pupils' results in national tests of English and mathematics were well above average in 2002 and 2003 and the provisional results for 2004 suggest the pupils are continuing to perform at a high level.²
- Year 6 test results for 2003 showed the pupils had made excellent progress since they were tested in Year 2 in 1999.
- Pupils achieve well, regardless of differences in their gender or ethnic background.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve very well.
- In lessons, pupils respond with very good levels of interest and effort to mostly challenging teaching and thus achieve well.
- The oldest pupils' attainment in physical education exceeds the standard expected nationally.
- Some more able pupils in Year 2 do not achieve to their full potential, especially in reading.

Commentary

1. In the 2003 national tests of English, mathematics and science, results in English and mathematics were well above the national average and those in science were average. The school's mathematics results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 (29.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.3 (29.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29 (28.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.
The average points scores for over 90 per cent of schools are in the range 23 - 31 points.*

2. The work of present Year 6 pupils shows the same picture of standards in English, mathematics and science as the 2003 test results. Provisional results from the 2004 national tests confirm inspectors' judgements that English and mathematics standards are high and science standards are average. A significant rise in English and mathematics test results, which led to a national School Achievement Award in 2003, means that standards are now considerably higher than at the previous inspection. In

² At the time of publication national results in the 2004 tests for Years 2 and 6 were not available and no exact comparison between the school's results and national ones is therefore possible.

other subjects, the Year 6 work seen by inspectors is of average standard in ICT and good standard in physical education.³

3. Pupils' achievement over the long-term is good for both the previous and the present Year 6 groups. Achievement is very good in English and mathematics and good overall when other subjects are taken into account. Year 6 pupils have achieved well because they started at school with attainment which was average but they have left with overall attainment which is above average. A significant element in achievement is the fact that, throughout the school, there is very good provision for and achievement by the many pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils are assessed within their first half term in the school and receive effective targeted support from a specialist bilingual support teacher. By Year 6, they have done just as well as others across the range of subjects while also surmounting the challenge of developing their spoken and written English.
4. The variations in standards achieved by pupils as they leave the school exactly reflect the school's priorities and provisions. Standards are highest in English and mathematics where the school has responded fully to the national drive for improvement. In this school, provision for English is rightly a particular priority in view of the many pupils who are using English as an additional language. In mathematics, staff training has been particularly extensive and effective. Less attention has been paid to developing work in science but provision and pupils' achievement are satisfactory. Good standards in physical education reflect good teaching, pupil enthusiasm and some valuable extension of learning opportunities beyond lessons. In ICT, the school's computer suite and equipment, which were adequate when originally acquired, are no longer sufficient for the school to fully meet higher national expectations in the subject. Consequently, standards in this subject, though satisfactory, are not as good as in some others.
5. Pupils' good long-term achievement is also apparent when the 2003 Year 6 pupils' overall test results are compared with their scores in earlier tests when they were in Year 2. This shows that they made extremely good progress compared with pupils of similar age across the country. This excellent progress is explained partly by the very good teaching in Years 3 – 6 which is consistently very challenging and also very supportive for pupils of all abilities. However, inspectors and school agree that the apparent progress between the Year 2 and Year 6 tests also reflects the likelihood that some pupils did not achieve to their full potential in the Year 2 tests. This interpretation is consistent with present findings that some more able pupils do not attain as highly as they could in Year 2, because the teaching does not fully challenge them, especially in reading. However, the overall satisfactory quality of teaching helps the great majority of Year 2 pupils to do as well as they should in the tests and, overall, achievement by younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. As in Years 3 – 6, pupils respond with interest, good behaviour and endeavour in lessons.
6. Present Year 2 pupils' work is of overall average standard. This is true of writing, mathematics, science, ICT and physical education. Present standards in writing and

³ The inspection focused on the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT, together with physical education and the full range of work at the Foundation Stage. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language was also a focus. Work was sampled in other subjects but no overall judgements of provision or standards in these subjects are made. As this is a denominational Church of England school, religious education is the subject of a separate inspection and report.

mathematics are a good deal better than as shown (below) in the 2003 test results and this is reflected in the provisional results of the 2004 tests. In reading, standards are below average because the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level of attainment (level 3) in the National Curriculum is lower than in most schools.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (17.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.4 (14.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.2 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.
The average points scores for over 90 per cent of schools are in the range 11 – 19 points*

7. The school has relatively few pupils with special educational needs. Like other pupils, they benefit greatly from the teachers' conscientious commitment to equal opportunities and the very good ethos of attitudes, behaviour and relationships. These pupils vary in their achievement but overall achieve well in relation to their capabilities and needs.
8. At the Foundation Stage, children start at the school with average attainment. The children achieve satisfactorily and, by the end of the reception year, most of them achieve most of the learning goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. In the areas of learning in personal, social and emotional development and physical development, children's overall attainment exceeds the goals set.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good** and they make excellent relationships. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **very good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inclusive ethos of the school shines through all its activities.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about the fun they have whilst learning.
- Warm, collaborative relationships are a consistent feature of school life.
- There are lots of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative.

Commentary

9. The school creates an environment where friendliness and helpfulness happen naturally and without prompting. There is an atmosphere of order, purpose and cheerful engagement in all activities. In lessons, there is a noticeable desire to learn and an appealing atmosphere of enjoyment and concentration. Many pupils are confident beyond their years, willing to take initiative and responsibility with little hesitation and the school works hard to encourage and develop these qualities.
10. Relationships are excellent. Pupils co-operate thoughtfully in lessons and all play happily together. They approach each other, school staff and visitors in a confident, lively and articulate manner. The school pays consistent attention to pupils' personal development and self-esteem and pupils are encouraged well by staff to consider the impact of their

actions on others. Pupils respect each others' differences. Although pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, there was no evidence of bullying or vindictive behaviour during the inspection. In discussion, pupils are keen to point out that, despite occasional 'silliness', this sort of behaviour is largely absent and they are very enthusiastic about the friendliness of their school and the 'laughter and fun' they have whilst learning with their teachers. The school's very positive ethos of valuing and welcoming all pupils benefits especially those pupils with special educational needs and those who start at the school with little English.

11. Behaviour around the school is very good and the intervention of staff is only occasionally necessary. Pupils show self-discipline and behave well as a matter of course. There has been one fixed-term exclusion during the last year and this was due to circumstances that required specialist intervention and has now been resolved.

*Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	52	0	0
White - Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	14	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	55	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other	6	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	8	0	0
Black or Black British - African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	7	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

- The school creates a secure atmosphere where moral and social values are enthusiastically examined and explored. School staff set a very clear example of care, respect and openness in their relations with pupils. Acknowledging and respecting 'differences and similarities' is a feature of the school ethos and pupils have many opportunities to develop spiritual and cultural understanding through assemblies, lessons in personal, social and health education and through work across the curriculum. It is clear from work seen that the school promotes a global approach to the curriculum. Religious and cultural diversity is reflected in displays and resources throughout the school. The many opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity within the curriculum help pupils to develop strong relationships and a good understanding of each other.

Attendance

- Taking account of all relevant factors, overall attendance is satisfactory. Rigorous monitoring procedures are in place and all concerns are followed-up quickly with pupils, parents and carers. The level of unauthorised absence is within an acceptable range, but attendance levels overall are lower than the national average. This is hard to avoid in a school where some parents take pupils on extended holidays abroad and only one or two

persistent cases of this significantly affect overall figures. However, the learning opportunities for those involved will be negatively affected.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.0	School data:	0.3
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A satisfactory curriculum receives good enrichment from activities outside lessons. Overall, the school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall and very good in Years 3 - 6. Assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching across the school is particularly skilful in encouraging interest, effort and co-operative behaviour in pupils.
- Pupils' responsible attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and keen application to their work are helping them to learn well in lessons, and very well in Years 3 - 6.
- Teaching in Years 3 – 6 is both very challenging and very supportive for pupils of all abilities.
- Across the school, teachers strive conscientiously to promote equal opportunities but the opportunities for some more able pupils in Year 2 are reduced by a lack of challenge in the teaching.
- Teaching in the nursery sometimes lacks a clear focus and sufficient sensitivity to the ways children learn.
- Teaching makes good use of the contributions of support staff.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support and enliven teaching and learning.

Commentary

14. Lessons in this school are calm, orderly, happy and productive events. In part, this simply reflects the very good ethos found throughout the life of the school. The high expectations of the headteacher and her staff about behaviour, the clear example of care and respect they set and the sensitive guidance that encourages pupils to make excellent relationships combine to create an excellent basis for teaching and learning in the classroom.
15. In addition, the teachers have good individual skills for motivating pupils, by setting interesting and suitable tasks, supporting pupils thoroughly and rewarding achievement carefully. Teachers' rewards are almost always through expressions of personal warmth and, as they are well respected by pupils, this is very effective in encouraging pupils' further endeavour. Pupils almost always behave very well in lessons and do so as a

matter of habit. Teachers, therefore, rarely need to intervene over matters of order or procedure and time is able to be devoted fully to teaching and learning. Responsible attitudes are also encouraged by the way teachers share their objectives for their lessons with pupils and discuss with pupils personal targets for improving their work. Pupils want to do well and know what they must do to succeed, and, as a result, they apply themselves well to their tasks.

16. All of these positive features are especially evident in Years 3 – 6, although they are also often found in the reception year and Years 1 and 2. In the nursery class, though, there are some times when the children are not so enthusiastic and apply themselves less well when the teaching or activities provided do not spark their interest.
17. Teachers are committed to providing equal opportunities for their pupils and they almost always set challenging tasks for pupils of all abilities and then give them very good guidance which is based on a good knowledge of the subjects. The teaching is well focused on precisely defined objectives for the learning. These are especially prominent features of the teaching in Years 3 – 6 and of the teaching of numeracy and writing skills. As a result, older pupils of all ability levels achieve the very best they can in these areas of learning. In the remaining teaching, there are two exceptions to the overwhelmingly positive general picture. One of these is in the nursery class where the child-chosen activities planned and the direct teaching sometimes lack a clear focus on the intended learning. A second inconsistency is in Year 2 where some of the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their tasks in writing and mathematics and, especially, in reading. These pupils still tackle their work keenly and they achieve satisfactorily but they do not have the opportunity to progress as rapidly as they could. The school recognises that procedures for ensuring the consistently correct identification of and provision for pupils with high ability or particular talents need improvement and this is already identified as a priority in planning for the future.
18. The matching of pupils' tasks to their previous learning is supported by overall satisfactory processes for assessing pupils' progress. Procedures are good in English and mathematics where frequent measures and tests of progress are made and used to identify where pupils need extra help. In other subjects, there is a much simpler but systematic approach linked to identification of learning intentions in the curriculum planning. These arrangements are relatively new and have yet to yield all the potential benefits, for example, from analysis of where pupils' progress is most and least rapid.
19. Support staff are deployed mostly in classes up to and including Year 2. Together with the part-time specialist teacher who helps pupils with English as an additional language, they work closely with the teachers to see that all pupils are fully included in learning opportunities relevant to their needs. The contribution to the teaching of the nursery children is very valuable. Support staff share the whole-school commitment to promoting equality and a positive ethos and they work hard to help pupils finding difficulty. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to learn well in the classroom alongside their peers.
20. Some use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects, but there are a good many missed opportunities to use ICT to make the teaching more dynamic or learning more independent for pupils. This is largely a reflection of the fact that the accommodation for ICT is poor and the aged equipment offers limited facilities and poor reliability which discourages usage.

21. Parents and pupils disagree with each other about homework, some wishing more and others less, but the great majority are content. In the main, arrangements are satisfactory but pupils report some irregularity in the setting of the work.
22. Overall, the teaching is better than at the previous inspection. There are more good, and more very good, lessons than previously, particularly in Years 3 – 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	11 (35%)	13 (40%)	5 (16%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum with **good** opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation and resources is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Amongst subjects, the provision for mathematics stands out for its quality.
- The headteacher has made an invaluable contribution to good planning for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- The school enriches the curriculum well with music and art, a good improvement since the previous inspection.
- The accommodation and equipment for ICT, the library and the overall stock of books for English are barely adequate.

Commentary

23. The curriculum provides pupils with a soundly balanced and comprehensive programme of work that fully meets National Curriculum requirements and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Within this overall picture, the curriculum for mathematics is particularly strong and the implementation of national guidance, both for this subject and for literacy, has been very effective in promoting the high standards of the oldest pupils. The school's commitment to including all pupils in effective opportunities for learning that meet their needs spans the whole curriculum. It is especially evident in the good provision for pupils in the early stages of learning English where work is well planned and targeted at the specific language needs of pupils learning English. For example, key vocabulary is highlighted in the planning so that it can be continually reinforced in a variety of ways.
24. A further strength is the comprehensive provision for personal, social and health education which benefits from the headteacher's keen leadership. This element of the school's work and pupils' learning is close to her heart and is implemented very effectively. The headteacher has analysed the most important characteristics in preparing pupils to become confident, tolerant, healthy and responsible citizens and leads staff well in seeing that these goals permeate every aspect of school life.

25. The statutory curriculum is enriched well by educational visits and visitors, by community links and by optional activities outside lessons in sport and, especially, in the arts. The headteacher has made creative and effective use of her good links with the local community to enrich pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils enjoy a good variety of special events, such as working with artists and professional musicians from different cultures. This makes a strong and meaningful contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because it is woven into the whole curriculum. These initiatives play a significant role in the school's very positive ethos, and the extent to which all pupils feel valued. They also represent an improvement in the curricular provision since the previous inspection.
26. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The classrooms are of adequate size and the school hall is a good facility. However, the school occupies a small and compact site which suffers from a shortage of space. The ICT suite and library are of inadequate size and hinder teaching and learning. Despite some recent additions, the school's resources of books for English and computers for ICT are barely adequate. In both of these subjects, it is only because of teachers' and pupils' high endeavour that pupils' achievement surpasses the quality of the resources. Financial pressures have made it difficult for the school to spend all that is desirable on resources in the last few years. In physical education, the lack of an outdoor field causes concern, though the school manages this well and, whilst pupils do miss out on specific sports, the school compensates for this with other activities.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **very good** care of pupils and there is **good** provision of support, advice and guidance. **Good** account is taken of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel safe and are keen to come and learn in what they describe as a '10 out of 10' school.
- There are close and trusting relationships between pupils and school staff.
- All staff know the pupils very well as individuals.
- Formal and informal support networks are well developed.

Commentary

27. The school works hard to build a strong sense of belonging and security for all the pupils and, consequently, they are very enthusiastic about coming to school and 'love being here'. Close relationships exist between pupils and staff and a strong and very inclusive school ethos provides pupils with safety and stimulation in an environment where 'similarities and differences' are used to encourage collaboration and learning.
28. The school 'friendship squad' provides a pupil-to-pupil service to resolve disagreements at a grass-roots level, seeking staff involvement when necessary. This appears to work very well and pupils describe its impact in glowing terms. Pupils have access to good personal support, advice and guidance as they progress through school. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal progress and most pupils readily describe their personal targets, progress and performance. All staff know the pupils very well and good school networks ensure that all essential information is captured and used to strengthen the support provided to individual pupils. Close liaison is maintained with relevant authorities concerning the well being of pupils, especially where they have particular needs. Parents of pupils with significant emotional needs appreciate the efforts made for their children by the school. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are reliably conducted.
29. There is an 'Eco Committee' of pupils, which provides feedback to staff and makes requests for changes and improvements to school facilities to which the school responds. It gives good help to the school in ascertaining and acting upon pupils' views, but the school's planning provides for extension of these processes by establishment of a school council with a more comprehensive brief for discussing the life of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and with other schools are **satisfactory**. Links with the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is well regarded by parents and the local community.
- There is consistent parental involvement in the resolution of specific issues.
- Community links are well used to enrich pupil experience.
- The efforts made by the school to involve parents, through the use of their views, lack energy and focus.

Commentary

30. The great majority of parents completing the pre-inspection questionnaire for parents express their contentment with almost all aspects of the school.
31. A sound range of information and consultation events helps to keep parents informed about school standards and pupil progress towards both learning and behaviour targets. However, a small but significant minority of parents is unhappy about the amount and regularity of homework and about the reliability of information about pupil progress. Annual reports provide a detailed and informative summary of current progress, but future targets and the steps required to achieve them are not so explicitly described. Although parents find the headteacher approachable and responsive, the school does not have systematic procedures for inviting and receiving parents' views and, consequently, their formal contribution to the shape and direction of the school is minimal. Some of the materials used to encourage parental contribution, such as homework and reading diaries, are uninspiring as a means to encourage parents' support for pupils' learning or participation in day-to-day school activity.
32. The school is uncompromising about parental involvement in its attempts to resolve difficult issues concerning particular pupils and this produces good results. A small group of interested parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning through helping in the classroom and by offering practical support during trips, visits and clubs, and by cultivation of the school's impressive garden with its variety of shrubs, vegetables and fruit.
33. The school has a very strong reputation in the local community and it exploits a good range of community links which are used thoughtfully to enrich the curriculum. Links with the church and with local sports, arts and music organizations are good.
34. Satisfactory links with other schools include a useful relationship with a nearby city technology college where Year 6 pupils have, for example, visited to use ICT facilities. Some pupils from Manchester Grammar School visit to hear pupils read. Mechanisms for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher's leadership is **good**. The contribution to leadership and management by other key staff and by governors is **satisfactory**. Management of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very positive ethos and excellent relationships strongly reflect the headteacher's commitment to fundamental values and aims.
- Starting from governors' clear principles, the school strives conscientiously to care for and support all as individuals, regardless of background.
- Monitoring of school performance is not as rigorous as necessary to ensure all-round high quality or improvement.
- Some systems for managing the work of the school are not sufficiently rigorous.
- School finances are carefully managed by the headteacher and governors.

Commentary

35. The most significant feature of the leadership and management of the school is the personal leadership of the headteacher. Her commitment and her command of the respect of the adults and pupils around her are the driving force behind the school's success. The headteacher is an effective leader who has a clear vision for the school's development and a sure focus on the basic values and aims she shares with staff. Top priorities in leadership are the full implementation of those values and aims, the promotion of high standards and continued improvement in all areas of the curriculum. A good team spirit exists amongst the teaching and support staff. Curriculum leaders provide good role models for other staff and for their pupils.
36. Very good care, and full inclusion in all opportunities, of a very diverse pupil group are very strong outcomes of a positive, supportive environment. This has been created by the headteacher's commitment to making everyone, staff and pupils alike, feel valued as individual members of the school community. Her recent innovative input to provisions for pupils' overall personal and social development is indicative of her on-going commitment to developing all pupils as valuable individuals in a multi-ethnic society. The excellent relationships identified during inspection are a direct consequence of implementation of very good policies and associated practices agreed and overseen by the headteacher and governing body.
37. Procedures for managing the work of the school are satisfactory overall, but the school's systems are not as strong as the more personal qualities of the leadership and teamwork shown by staff. Responsibility for particular aspects of the school's work, and the leadership and management of curriculum subjects, is delegated appropriately. Monitoring of teaching and learning is now being undertaken in some subjects and most subject leaders examine teachers' planning and pupils' workbooks. In the main subjects, lessons are observed to check the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Checks on school effectiveness have led the school to identify for itself most areas for development identified by the inspection. However, some lack of rigour in checks on the school's performance results in some unrecognised inconsistencies, for example, in homework, and some relative weaknesses.
38. An example of a school shortcoming not identified by internal checks is in the management of provision for special educational needs. Although the conscientious approach of teachers and support staff, and the school's very positive ethos, result in good achievement by pupils with special educational needs, the systems for managing the provision are unsatisfactory, leaving the quality of some aspects to trust. The school has not kept pace with the requirements of the current national Code of Practice on provision for special educational needs, which has been introduced since the previous inspection. The targets on individual learning plans are now very specific, and in this respect the school has achieved the improvement recommended at the previous inspection. However, few of these targets are written by the class teacher and this weakens the link with teachers' planning of pupils' work in the classroom. The special educational needs co-ordinator recognises that, until very recently, the school has also not identified and addressed special educational needs for younger pupils with sufficient urgency and rigour.
39. Although the school has developed many good practices to include and accelerate the learning of pupils for whom English is an additional language, the management of systems and procedures for doing so are not always formalised. This can result in an over-reliance on key individuals in the school.

40. The governing body fulfils well its obligation to see that the school fulfils statutory duties and that policies are kept up-to-date in ways that are responsive to the particular needs of the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Other governor responsibilities are satisfactorily undertaken. Governors have identified a need for further training to include its most recently appointed members. Plans are now in place to attend a diocesan training event in the autumn to help governors strengthen their ability to fulfil strategic duties of monitoring the work of the school as a critical friend and thus helping to shape improvement.
41. The school's finances are managed well. Despite a very tight budget in recent years, the school has succeeded in maintaining its commitment, as a school priority, to fund the provision of classroom support assistants where they are currently most needed. Careful strategic planning by the headteacher and governors has seen a budget deficit move to surplus in the last year, paving the way for a start to have been made on renewing resources of books.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	549,838
Total expenditure	543,580
Expenditure per pupil	2,482

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	28,427
Balance carried forward to the next	34,685

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

42. Children join the nursery with a wide range of social, communication and mathematical skills but overall they start out with attainment which is broadly average for their age. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and helps children of all abilities to make satisfactory progress. As a result, most children leave the reception class achieving the goals set nationally for learning in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. This is in spite of some instances of unsatisfactory teaching in the nursery, where planning does not always have sufficiently clear learning intentions for different groups of children. In both the nursery and reception class, teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to the children's learning. In the reception class, the teaching of physical co-ordination skills is very good and provision for social development is good. Consequently, in these areas of development, children achieve well and exceed the goals set for learning by the end of reception. In other areas, the children achieve satisfactorily and their attainment at the end of the reception year is in line with the relevant national goals.
43. The national requirements of the curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage have increased since the previous inspection. There have also been changes of staff managing and teaching within the Foundation Stage, and changes in the attainment of children when they join the nursery. This means that, although the provision is currently led and managed satisfactorily, the school has not sustained all the previous strengths in these classes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults succeed in helping children to become enthusiastic learners.
 - Children progress well in their independence, concentration and social skills.
 - In the nursery, there are occasions when children lack purpose.
44. In both the nursery and reception class, children find the variety of suitable activities and attractive resources very inviting. Adults set a very good example of how to behave and help children to cultivate a strong sense of justice. In this environment, children become enthusiastic learners and most develop a mature sense of responsibility. Teaching, standards and achievement are good overall. Children exceed the goals for learning in this area.
45. In the reception class, adults have high expectations of children's independence and level of responsibility. This, combined with warm and trusting relationships, means children willingly co-operate with adults and each other. During the inspection, there were several times when children worked together impressively. One such occasion involved three

children collaborating successfully to wield a dustpan and brush and sweep waste art materials from a table.

46. In the nursery, children's eager anticipation is sometimes dashed when they hear about activities but then have to wait a considerable time before 'their turn' to try them. Because of the lack of consistently precise planning and organisation, there are times when some individual children in the nursery are unsure about what to do and so wander aimlessly. Nevertheless, children working with the nursery nurse become engrossed and concentrate well at activities, such as observing and drawing butterflies.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers successfully promote children's interest in books, letters and sounds.
 - Children who are developing English as an additional language make good strides in expressing themselves.
 - Opportunities for children to write independently are sometimes missed.
47. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall and it helps children to achieve satisfactorily. By the end of reception, children meet the goals set for this area. In both the nursery and reception classes, all children, including those who are learning English as an additional language, are alert, interested and well motivated. They all want to talk with adults and share their experiences at different times during the day. Good relationships between adults and children help those children who are new to learning English to rapidly increase in confidence and achieve well. Both classes have attractive and inviting book areas, although not all books are accessible to the children. In the nursery, at 'snack time', the nursery nurse reads interesting books expressively and holds the attention of the whole class well. This is an effective contribution to children becoming increasingly interested in books and stories and wanting to discuss them.
48. In the reception class, adults use a variety of methods successfully to promote children's interest in letters and sounds. These include choosing books carefully to share as a class that relate to a current 'theme', such as 'mini-beasts', and encouraging children to make their own books. However, these strategies are more successful in developing children's reading than their writing. While standards in a significant minority of children will exceed expected reading levels, fewer children have the same confidence in writing. Copying an adult's writing is given emphasis at the expense of children's own individual attempts at writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults have high expectations of children's skills with numbers in the reception class.
 - Teaching in the nursery does not place enough emphasis on guiding children through practical activity.
49. Teaching of this area of learning is satisfactory overall. In the reception class, adults have high expectations of children's number work and so children are challenged well. By the

end of the reception year, children's satisfactory achievement has resulted in overall attainment which meets the Early Learning Goals. However, children's ability to count is good and a significant minority of children also reach good standards in recognising and writing numerals. Most children use numbers to calculate and they identify shapes at the levels expected for their age. In the nursery, there are not enough planned opportunities for adults to extend children's knowledge and understanding of number through practical activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links between this area of learning and children's communication, language, and literacy, and with creative development.
 - Adults make good use of the outdoor environment to support early scientific and geographical skills.
 - There is not enough planned focus on intended learning to guide the teaching in the nursery.
50. This extensive area of learning encompasses early scientific, geographical, historical, computer and technological skills. Teaching and children's achievement are satisfactory overall and, by the end of reception, children attain the Early Learning Goals for this area. In the reception class, the many elements in this area of learning are successfully planned to link with other areas. For example, children learn about the past creatively by dressing up in old-fashioned clothes and pretending to be people from the past. Children enthusiastically make their own books about snails and so, while increasing their scientific awareness, their interest in books is reinforced. Good use is made of the outdoor environment around the school and immediate locality to stimulate children's interest in routes and maps. In the nursery, suitable and interesting activities are provided, such as 'bug hunts' or observing the emergence of butterflies in a 'butterfly house', but they are not fully exploited. This is because planning does not identify exactly how and for what purpose the teaching can support children's learning through these activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have regular opportunities to use their imaginations
 - There are times when adults direct children too much.
51. In both the nursery and reception classes, children have daily opportunities to learn through using their imaginations because they have good access to suitable activities and resources. For example, in the nursery, children have miniature creatures to play with in soil or sand, and in the reception class, children use construction equipment to make 'stations for trains that sometimes fly'. However, when adults in the reception class work with children with art materials, opportunities for children to make their own choices are sometimes missed. Teaching is satisfactory overall and helps children to achieve satisfactorily so that they attain the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the reception class, expectations of children's gymnastic skills are high so they achieve well and reach good standards.
 - A good variety of activities in both nursery and reception ensures that children handle plenty of small equipment.
52. The variety of activities available in both nursery and the reception class means that children gradually refine their skills with tools, such as scissors and glue spatulas. Children's skills with small equipment are at the level of control expected for their age. However, in the reception class, expectations of children's gymnastic skills are high. Teaching is very good and children demonstrate considerable and justifiable pride in skills, such as controlled forward rolls and cartwheels. Good achievement leads to attainment exceeding the national goals in this area at the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over the last three years, the oldest pupils' results in national tests have shown a consistently high standard.
- Some of the more able pupils' imaginative writing in Year 6 is of especially high standard.
- The good, and often very good, teaching is systematic when necessary, but also generates much enjoyment in learning about literacy and literature.
- Some more able pupils' work at the end of Year 2 does not do justice to their capabilities.
- There are weaknesses in the support given to work in reading by the library accommodation and the school's stock of books.

Commentary

53. In both 2002 and 2003, the Year 6 pupils' results in the national tests were well above the national average. The 2004 test results show attainment at a similar level, although national data for comparison is not available at the time of reporting. Within the Year 6 work in writing, there are several examples of very high attainment. Some very imaginative writing is done which engages the reader with its lively use of a range of writing styles and devices, interesting turns of phrase and a breadth of vocabulary. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. Starting school with broadly average skills in literacy, pupils progress very well so that, by the time they leave the school, their standards are high. Their test results compare very favourably with those of similar schools. A significant feature is the very good achievement of pupils with English as an additional language. By Year 6, they do just as well as classmates who have only ever spoken English. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well. Like all other pupils throughout the school, they respond with interest and often high endeavour to teaching which is mostly challenging and very supportive.
54. Achievement is best in Years 3 – 6 where pupils of all abilities consistently do as well as they are able in all aspects of the subject. Achievement is good for most pupils in Years 1 and 2, with the very good achievement of the many young pupils with English as an additional language an especially prominent feature. Most pupils achieve at least as well as expected for their level of capability. However, the achievement of some more able Year 2 pupils is only just satisfactory since they do not do as well as they might, especially in reading, when their earlier attainment is taken into account. Overall, standards at the end of Year 2 are average in speaking, listening and writing and below average in reading where the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (three) of attainment is well below the national average.
55. The particularly good quality of older pupils' writing is the result of very effective teaching in Years 3 – 6. Teachers' expectations are very high and pupils receive very clear guidance, backed up by specific targets for pupils, which define the improvements in their writing at which they should aim. These targets are often expressed in broad, abstract terms, though some pupils need more limited, concrete actions to aim at (such as 'remembering to use capital letters to start sentences'). The teaching of reading is stimulating in the way literature is approached and analysed in ways that tap into pupils'

interests and enthusiasms. Some of the best writing pupils do is when they try to emulate the writing in stories they have enjoyed exploring critically with the teacher.

56. Teaching throughout the school shows a very good balance between systematic approaches to development of basic skills in spelling, punctuation, and grammar and lively stimulation of pupil enjoyment of story, poetry and other forms of text. Pupils are shown that reading and writing are fun and they respond by finding enjoyment and pride in their abilities to understand words and then use them to create their own effects in stories, poems or a variety of other forms. This, together with teachers' very good skills for managing pupils, results in pupils behaving consistently very well and working with care and effort. Teachers' very encouraging approach, very good relations with pupils and the way they value what pupils have to say are also very effective in encouraging pupils to listen well and speak out confidently and clearly in front of the class, and sometimes to the whole school in assemblies.
57. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 shows several strengths and the teaching is mainly good in lessons. Overall, the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory because other evidence from examining pupils' past work, from discussions with pupils and from hearing them read shows some inconsistency in the challenge presented to pupils. The teaching of early reading and writing skills to younger pupils is structured and effective, with a strong emphasis on pupils' recognition of phonics (the relations between sounds and letters, or patterns of letters), but also with systematic memorisation of the most common simple words. This gives good support to pupils' progress in reading and spelling. However, some more able pupils in Year 2 are practising their reading with text that does not challenge or excite them and, as a result, they make slower progress than they might. In writing, progress is mainly good in Years 1 and 2 though the development of joined handwriting is slower than expected nationally. Again, expectations in Year 2 of the most able pupils' achievement in writing are not as high as these pupils' past attainment warrants.
58. Some good use is made of computer programs to help younger pupils practise and develop their basic literacy skills but, in later years, although pupils enjoy word-processing their writing occasionally, the exploitation of ICT as a tool to enhance teaching and learning is underdeveloped, largely because of the inadequacy of the ICT resources.
59. The fact that pupils develop positive attitudes to literacy and literature is almost entirely due to the lively teaching they receive in lessons. It is certainly not the result of the school's library and book resources which, far from celebrating books, authors and reading as a pastime, seem to devalue them. The library is located in a small multi-purpose bay off a corridor. It does not encourage use, or attract pupils to browse through books or read voluntarily. Although a start has been made on renewing books, most of the school's books to support reading remain elderly and sometimes tatty. Most pupils' early practice in reading is undertaken using books published more than a quarter of a century ago and which do not, therefore, reflect well the modern society which is these pupils' everyday experience. It is not surprising that some pupils say the books are boring and prefer to read their own books when they are fortunate enough to have parents who buy books for them. The stock of readers also reflects poorly the cultural diversity of the pupils' everyday environment and experience, though there is compensation for this in a good number of cross-cultural references made during lessons. The library and book resources give poor support to the work of teachers and pupils who are keen and committed. They deserve better.

60. The two teachers who lead and manage provision in the subject do so well. They lead and support colleagues well in a coherent and largely consistent school implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. A good system of regular assessment of pupils' progress is in place and is used to set targets against which pupils' progress is tracked. Checks are also made on lesson planning, on lessons themselves and on pupils' work but these have not been sufficiently sharp to remedy those inconsistencies within the overall good provision described above. A measure of good leadership and management, however, is the good improvement in provision since the previous inspection which has led to a significant rise in the oldest pupils' standards from average to well-above-average level.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. Work across the curriculum makes sound use of pupils' developing literacy skills and provides opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate them. This is especially true in speaking and listening, because teachers all are very effective in encouraging pupils to listen well and in drawing out confident and sometimes extensive contributions to class discussion across the curriculum. In several subjects, pupils have substantial opportunities to practise their writing, although, on some occasions, when pupils copy notes, such as in science and history, they receive less benefit than they would if composing their own sentences.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 6 pupils' results in the 2003 national tests were in the top five per cent of all schools nationally.
- High-quality teaching in most classes challenges all pupils and encourages independent thinking very effectively.
- Teachers' early recognition of misunderstandings and taking action on a day-to-day basis support pupils' progress and enjoyment very well.
- Pupils' excellent relationships with each other and their very good behaviour contribute significantly to their very good achievement by the time they leave school.
- More able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the work set in Year 2.
- The subject co-ordinator's monitoring of aspects of teaching is having a positive impact in most classes.

Commentary

62. Over the last three years, the oldest pupils' national test results have pointed to consistently high standards. Year 6 pupils' results, in both the 2002 and 2003 national tests, were well above the national average. Both inspectors' examination of present Year 6 work and the provisional results of the 2004 tests show that high standards are being maintained. Almost half of the year group is working successfully at a level above that expected nationally. Overall, pupils have achieved very well in reaching these standards since they started at the school with broadly average attainment. Pupils with special educational needs, together with those for whom English is an additional language, also achieve very well.

63. Achievement for the great majority of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good, but some more able pupils achieve less than they could. Fewer pupils achieve the higher level 3 of National Curriculum attainment than nationally. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards at the end of Year 2 are average. This is shown by examination of present Year 2 work and by most recent years' test results. The well-below average Year 2 test results in 2003 were untypical and the provisional results of the 2004 tests are considerably better, though national data is not yet available as a comparison.
64. The high standards attained in Year 6 reflect the very good teaching throughout Years 3 – 6. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' concentration and involvement in lessons. This means that most pupils understand the mathematics being taught and complete tasks in a purposeful and productive environment. A particularly strong element of the very good, and occasionally excellent, teaching is the promotion of pupils' confidence to independently use their developing mathematical knowledge and understanding to solve problems, in a wide variety of real-life situations. Almost all lessons are presented at a rapid pace to sustain interest and concentration. As a result, most pupils remember what they have been taught and apply themselves in a most positive manner. The school uses a very good range of tests, the results of which enable teachers to have a good knowledge of what pupils have learned and also what areas of learning need to be revisited. Marking is undertaken systematically in most classes, but a lack of consistency results in some pupils' work being presented in an untidy manner, which can lead to mistakes when making calculations. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good. This includes lessons in Years 1 and 2, but from examining Year 2 pupils' workbooks, it is clear that the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are set. Consequently, only a low proportion exceeds the national average level of attainment in their work and in their tests. Taking this into account, teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
65. All pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics and many older pupils say it is a favourite subject, mainly because it is fun. Pupils co-operate very well and respond productively to regular opportunities to work independently. They eagerly accept a challenge. Relationships are excellent and pupils are confident to demonstrate their mathematical understanding when invited to write on the board or to explain a strategy they understand. Practical resources to develop understanding are supportively shared in both paired and group activities.
66. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable about the subject and very supportive of her colleagues. Most teachers have become enthusiastic and very effective as a consequence of accepting new initiatives. Management of the subject is good. Checking teachers' planning, examination of pupils' workbooks and the monitoring of lessons are now becoming well established. However, management processes are not rigorous enough to have resolved the inconsistency of challenge for some able younger pupils. Resources to support the teaching of mathematics are good. A clear measure of effective leadership and management is the improved quality of teaching and marked rise in the oldest pupils' standards from average to well-above-average level since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Planning for most curriculum areas identifies a good range of opportunities for teachers to use and further develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils, when researching aspects of life in different countries, group and represent data on life expectancy which they have collected. Pupils, therefore, come to appreciate the day-to-day use of mathematics. Year 3 pupils learn how the use of ICT can add clarity to a choice in ways of representing data. However, the use of ICT to support pupils' mathematical understanding is under-developed throughout the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of most pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding, especially in Years 3 – 6.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to use literacy and computer skills in science and to design their own investigations.
- Expectations of the most able, younger pupils are not consistently high.

Commentary

68. The work of most pupils throughout the school is of average standards in science and recent Year 6 results in national tests have been in line with the national average. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils and good achievement for those pupils who are also learning English as an additional language. Teaching of science is satisfactory overall and accounts for the steady progress pupils make in the subject. However, there are examples of good lessons for older pupils in which pupils learn well.
69. Teachers provide interesting work and manage pupils very well. Pupils enjoy science, particularly the practical work, and they are well motivated. They work hard even when their teacher is with another group of pupils. They enjoy sharing what they have learned and remain co-operative even when the pace of lessons is a little slow.
70. Teachers focus mostly on imparting sound scientific knowledge and they are successful in this. Expectations of older pupils' acquisition of knowledge and subject specific vocabulary are high overall. For example, pupils of all abilities in Year 5 confidently explain the distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' consumers in food chains. Nevertheless, while there has been satisfactory improvement in the amount of practical work since the previous inspection, there are missed opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for it. For example, pupils seldom devise their own investigations. Similarly, pupils do not always report investigations individually. When work is copied from the board, opportunities for self-expression, depth of understanding and extending their writing skills are missed. Similarly, there are too few times when pupils use computer skills to record their work.
71. The most able pupils in Year 2 explain scientific ideas with a wider vocabulary and greater reasoning than their less confident peers but the teaching does not always provide the level of challenge in lessons that would suit them.
72. Satisfactory management of the subject has ensured that, since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained and areas for development identified at that time have

been tackled successfully. This includes increasing the amount of monitoring undertaken by the co-ordinator. However, the school has understandably, and successfully, prioritised raising standards in English and mathematics. The co-ordinator correctly recognises the desirability of focusing on science next in order to bring about a similar increase in standards and achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall provision in ICT is **satisfactory**, although the accommodation and equipment resources to support the work are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy acquiring the skills to operate a sound variety of computer programs.
- The small size of the computer suite and the limitations of the aged equipment hinder teaching and learning.
- Some good use is made of ICT to support younger pupils' learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Commentary

73. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in ICT and the standards of their work throughout the school are in line with what is expected nationally for their ages. As they progress through the school, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of the basic principles behind ICT and of concepts like electronic mail and the Internet. They learn to use the computer, keyboard and mouse successfully to operate programs by, for example, making choices and selections, giving commands and entering and retrieving data. By Year 6, pupils have learnt to operate effectively a satisfactory range of programs for a range of purposes. They manipulate text, data and graphics competently and retrieve data successfully by searching databases. They use word processing programs with a good understanding of ways they can edit text and they know how to combine text, graphics, animations and sounds attractively in a multi-media presentation which incorporates both their own writing and material they have downloaded from the Internet. Pupils enjoy such challenges and are proud to display their achievements.
74. Although pupils learn a sound range of skills, the confidence and speed with which they apply them is limited by the relative lack of opportunity for them to practise and consolidate their skills. This is a direct consequence of the inadequate accommodation and equipment resources for the subject. Teachers and pupils are willing to do their best but the fact that the computer suite is barely large enough to accommodate half a class, which even then must share computers, imposes limitations on what can be done. The technical limitations, and sometimes unreliability of the equipment, both in the computer suite and in classrooms, are also a hindrance. Little direct evidence of teaching was seen during the inspection but what was seen pointed to overall satisfactory provision. A soundly planned curriculum is in place and there is systematic assessment of pupils' progress. Teachers do their best to work around the limitations of the accommodation and equipment but inevitably they are unable to help pupils achieve as well as they might. The continuity of teaching and learning is hindered by the need to split classes for any practical work.

75. The two teachers who lead the work in the subject do so well. They support colleagues well with advice and through consultation about what software to acquire, and they evaluate the work in the subject soundly. Teaching has become more knowledgeable and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. They are enthusiastic and conscientious in the face of several frustrations and endeavour to minimise the limitations of the computer suite and equipment. When installed six years ago, shortly after the previous inspection, the computer suite and its equipment would have been the envy of many schools, but today they lag well behind what most schools offer and are hardly adequate to meet raised national expectations for the subject. The purchase of a small bank of laptop computers has provided only minor mitigation of the problem. A further frustration has been what the school regards as weak support from the local education authority's technical support service in helping to maintain and update the equipment. The subject leaders are pressing for better accommodation and resources but recognise that neither the school's building nor its financial position present any simple solution to their plight.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. There are satisfactory examples of ICT being effectively incorporated in teaching and learning in a range of subjects of the curriculum but this is not a strong or regular feature. The limitations of the computer suite and classroom equipment inhibit the use of ICT to give extra impact to the teaching or to allow pupils challenging opportunities for independent learning. A positive feature, however, is the way younger pupils use classroom computers to test and reinforce their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Also, good use is made of a laptop computer and specialised programs to help pupils with little English build their vocabulary and understanding.

HUMANITIES

77. Neither history nor geography was inspected in depth because very few such lessons were taught during the period of inspection. No secure judgement can be made related to provision, standards, quality of teaching or achievement in either subject. However, school planning, pupils' workbooks and classroom displays were examined and discussions took place with some pupils and with the teacher who co-ordinates work in geography. The amount of curriculum time devoted to these subjects is satisfactory and planning, based on appropriately adapted national guidance, indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Adaptations include the study of Jamaica and Pakistan to take advantage of the background of many pupils who, with their parents, can add realism to lessons from personal experiences of those countries. Teachers identify key skills in planning units of work and have started to undertake related termly assessments of pupils' progress. There is little evidence of ICT being used either to add variety to the quality of pupils' work on display or to further develop communication technology skills.
78. In **history**, Year 3 pupils show good recognition and evaluation of change over time when talking about Florence Nightingale and life generally in Victorian times. Literacy skills are well supported when, for example, Year 4 pupils write good accounts of their activities as 'Tomb Robbers' as part of their response to Ancient Egyptian studies. Year 2 pupils write as Samuel Pepys diarists but the work is copied and a good opportunity is missed to develop independent writing related to the Great Fire of London. However, understanding is very well promoted by an extensive and attractive display that includes closely packed Tudor houses lining the banks of the River Thames as the fire develops. This illustrates

good cross-curricular links which are made with design and technology. Further curriculum enrichment involves Year 4 pupils visiting Bramhall Hall and Manchester Museum.

79. In **geography**, mapping skills are promoted from an early age and good use is made of the local area to give pupils a developing awareness of scale and direction. Pupils work with 'bird's-eye-view' perspective to further develop mapping concepts. Year 6 pupils use a large-scale map to trace a bus/walking tour of the city centre they have undertaken. An 'Eco' initiative currently being developed provides good opportunities for pupils to become fully involved in and learning about important environmental issues, such as waste, water and energy.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. The subjects of art and design, design and technology and music were not a focus of the inspection and no overall judgements about provisions or standards in these subjects are made. Only one lesson was observed in art and design and none in design and technology. Two lessons of music were seen, one of these, taught by a visiting specialist, being devoted entirely to recorder tuition. Singing in assemblies and hymn practice was heard.
81. In **art and design**, the one art lesson seen was a good lesson because of confident teaching that challenged pupils well to create card sculptures. Pupils were enthused and worked together very sensitively and co-operatively when evaluating each other's work. Planning documents and examples of pupils' work seen indicate that the required curriculum is in place. Standards of work seen in this limited sample were at expected levels of skill, and a few observational drawings of plants by pupils in Year 4 exceeded expectations for their age in their detail, sensitivity and perspective.
82. In **design and technology**, work on display indicates that pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to develop their ideas, for example, in designing and making puppets. Planning documents show that a sound programme of suitable work is in place. The subject is used well to involve parents who work with their children in a 'design and technology competition evening'.
83. The two lessons in **music** seen were both of very good quality, setting high expectations of what pupils could achieve and encouraging a very keen response from pupils. Whole-school singing in assemblies is of satisfactory standard and pupils respond to the headteacher's very lively leadership of hymn practice for Years 1 – 6 with great enthusiasm. A very good feature of provision is the opportunity for all Year 3 pupils to learn to play the recorder with the help of a visiting specialist teacher. This gives all pupils some basic instrumental skills and, in some cases, the enthusiasm to progress to learning other instruments in Years 4 – 6, where a significant number receive small-group tuition in woodwind, strings or guitar. At various times of the year, opportunities are provided outside lessons for pupils to sing in a choir, play recorders or learn percussion, and there are also opportunities to practise and apply skills in rehearsing and then performing to parents. A small group of pupils has also taken part in a series of workshops provided by 'Opera North', when they worked together to compose their own mini-opera.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Older pupils achieve well in swimming, gymnastics and games as a consequence of overall good teaching.
- Outside agencies and residential experiences add significant breadth to learning opportunities beyond lessons.
- Teachers and pupils use restricted space well.

Commentary

84. Year 6 pupils leave the school with standards that exceed the expectations for their age. Attainment in Year 2 is in line with the level expected. Overall, achievement is good.
85. Pupils swim for a three-term period between Year 3 and Year 4. In the current Year 4, over 90 per cent of pupils swim twenty-five metres and 80 per cent have gained free passes to the public pool as a result of their success in water-survival activities. In Year 5, all pupils swim the nationally recommended distance.
86. In a very good Year 5 gymnastics lesson, pupils were seen to create and perform fluent sequences on both floor and apparatus to a good standard. They consolidate existing skills and develop new ones linked to well-controlled movement, whilst demonstrating good awareness of speed and direction. They learn to identify good form and offer suggestions for improvement. Hallmarks of the very good teaching pupils receive include a constant encouragement to improve technique, based on good subject knowledge and the use of pupils to demonstrate and evaluate performance. Significant numbers of Year 6 boys and girls demonstrate above average skills in throwing and catching a tennis ball when rehearsing 'run-out' situations in cricket and rounders. A good number of pupils can bowl over-arm fluently and accurately as preparation for cricket.
87. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have opportunity to experience games coaching in five-week blocks, as part of a 'Passport to Sport' initiative. Boys and girls are observed dribbling with great skill as they practise and play basketball to a good standard. A weekend residential trip provides good opportunity for attending pupils to experience outdoor and adventurous activities in addition to team-building exercises.
88. The school has no access to playing fields and this restricts the transfer of skills learned during lessons into large team-game, competitive situations. However, as a preparation for team games, older pupils are taught to play a 'catch' form of volleyball to develop an understanding of tactics and the use of space. The small space available is used imaginatively, safely and well during lunch and break times.
89. The subject leader has been in post for a number of years and leads her subject well. She monitors teaching and learning and responds positively to colleagues' requests for guidance. She has developed an enthusiastic staff response to teaching physical education by arranging dance and games coaching. Given the very limiting space restrictions, overall resources are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained at the level reported at the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. The inspection did not focus on this area and no overall judgement about the provision is made. Although only one example of a lesson in this area of the curriculum was seen, examination of planning and discussions with staff and pupils show that a very good curriculum has been devised which integrates very well with the full range of the school's

provisions for pupils' personal and social development. It fully reflects the school's very clear and very successful commitment to the creation of an ethos of respect for others and co-operative relationships. Planning and provision benefit from the clear vision and strong direction in this aspect of the school's work that flows from the headteacher's good leadership. The one well-taught lesson seen took the form of 'Circle Time', an opportunity for pupils to take turns to offer any personal thoughts, feelings or concerns as they wish within a framework of rules that encourage respectful listening and supportive responses. The work of the Eco committee and the school's very good involvement of pupils in discussing ways to improve the life of the school also play an important part in introducing pupils to democratic procedures and the responsibilities of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3

The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).